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ABSTRACT

The Des Moines Independent Community School District program, Transitioning Youth to Employment (TYE), was implemented in the first semester of the 1983-84 school year. The program's purpose was to bring special education students from self-contained classrooms at the comprehensive high schools to Central Campus for a one-semester course designed to facilitate their transition from a self-contained classroom to the development of a high school vocational plan. In 1983-84, 38 students completed the fall course; 37 completed the spring course. The students were assigned to a morning or afternoon class that met daily for approximately two and one-half hours. Three instructors provided learning experiences in prevocational skills, vocational assessment, and vocational exploration. An evaluation of the program identified six areas for documentation and provided comments and recommendations for each. These areas were student enrollment, committee meetings, curriculum, individual student reports, staff orientation, and budget. Some of the comments and recommendations were as follows: (1) assessment of students was done at the home schools and could not be used to individualize TYE instruction; it was suggested that more of the assessment be done at the Central Campus; (2) it was noted that steering committee meetings were sparsely attended and suggestions were made for improving attendance; (3) a system should be developed for systematically collecting information from students, parents, and teachers; (4) the Central Campus classroom should be changed or modified to serve student needs; and (5) staff development should be provided for TYE teachers. (KC)

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TRANSITIONING YOUTH TO EMPLOYMENT (TYE):

CENTRAL CAMPUS SPECIAL EDUCATION VOCATIONAL PROGRAM

Joan Roberts, Ed.D.

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Director of Evaluation, Research and Testing

July 13, 1984

DES MOINES INDEPENDENT COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
DEPARTMENT OF EVALUATION, RESEARCH AND TESTING
EVALUATION ABSTRACT

July 13, 1984

PROJECT TITLE:	Transitioning Youth to Employment (TYE): Central Campus Special Education Vocational Program
COORDINATOR:	Linda Tisue, 284-7846
PROJECT STAFF:	3.0 classroom teachers
OPERATIONAL SITE:	Central Campus
POPULATION SERVED:	80 high school students from self-contained special education classrooms
FUNDING:	Sources: (Local) Special Education and Instructional Division
	Amount Budgeted: $119,934.00
	Amount Expended: 88,262.11 (as of May 31, 1984)

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

Transitioning Youth to Employment (TYE) brings special education students from self-contained classrooms at the comprehensive high schools to Central Campus for a one semester course designed to facilitate their transition from a self-contained classroom to the development of a high school vocational plan.

COMMENTS:

1. The target selection of second semester 9th graders and first semester 10th graders allows participating students to enroll in the vocational exploratory courses in their home high schools as a preparation for Central Campus courses during grades 11 and 12.
2. The majority of the vocational assessment is completed while students are enrolled in the TYE program; therefore, assessment information cannot be used to individualize TYE instruction.
3. The exploratory experiences offered through the program (drafting, metal and woodworking, and electrical) may not be appropriate for all participants.
4. There was limited feedback from students and parents regarding the TYE experience and no identified system for obtaining feedback from the home high school staff who work with the students after program completion.
5. Staff development on the TYE program has been generally informative; however, as students complete the program, TYE staff development should include activities to prepare prevocational high school teachers and core area teachers to work with special education students from self-contained classrooms.
6. The TYE program, the first Central Campus program to be evaluated, has experienced some difficulty with inconsistent attendance and suspension policies and nonuniform reporting procedures among the high schools.
7. Common planning time has not always been available for the TYE instructors which made it difficult for them to effectively team plan.

8. The monthly meetings of the Steering Committee, a vital part of the TYE program, were not well attended by all members.
9. The present classroom is not appropriate for some activities as acoustical problems interfere during assessment and prevocational skill work.
10. There has been little effort to cooperate with the existing New Horizon's program, despite some similarities with the TYE program, such as the responsibilities of the Work Experience Instructors.
11. As students complete the TYE program, individual evaluation folders are prepared and sent to the home high school for use in establishing an appropriate educational plan for each participant.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The Steering Committee should carefully examine the placement of this program in relation to home high school vocational exploratory courses (usually offered during grades 9 and 10) to insure that TYE students have an opportunity to enroll in home high school vocational exploratory classes.
2. The Steering Committee should investigate moving more of the assessment to the home high school and/or including an open entry/exit assessment portion as the first phase of the TYE program.
3. The vocational exploratory experiences should be expanded to include appropriate choices for students who have neither the interest or ability to work in drafting, metal, woodworking and electrical core areas.
4. There is a need for a systematic means of collecting program information from students, parents, and postprogram home high school teachers including special education, WEI's, vocational exploratory teachers, and core area teachers.
5. Building level staff development on the TYE program should provide information regarding special education students and ways to meet their needs, such as instructional modification strategies.
6. The Council of Principals needs to establish consistent attendance and suspension policies and reporting procedures among the high schools.
7. Lunch time and assigned duties of the TYE staff should be scheduled so as not to interfere with the preservation of their common plan time.
8. Regular attendance at the monthly meetings of the Steering Committee should be expected of all members. The meetings should be scheduled to facilitate such attendance.
9. Central Campus and central office administration should explore the possibility of changing classrooms or modifying the present one to provide a more appropriate environment for the learning activities.
10. The Steering Committee should investigate ways to cooperate with other district programs with similar program components.
11. Staff development should provide high school special education teachers of TYE students information about the content and use of the TYE individual evaluation reports and how they might use this information in working with students, parents, and staff in preparing an educational plan for each student.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Central Campus Special Education Program, Transitioning Youth to Employment (TYE), was implemented in the first semester of the 1983-84 school year. The program's purpose was to bring special education students from self-contained classrooms at the comprehensive high schools to Central Campus for a one semester course designed to facilitate their transition from a self-contained classroom to the development of a high school vocational plan.

In 1983-84, 38 students completed the fall course; 37 completed the spring course. The students were assigned to a morning or afternoon class which met daily for approximately 2-1/2 hours. Three instructors provided learning experiences in prevocational skills, vocational assessment and vocational exploration.

Student Selection

Special education supervisors, home school special education teachers and work experience instructors (WEI) were responsible for collecting school information for a referral folder. Prescreening selection criteria included categorical disability, an interest in the program and necessary skills for interpersonal communication. Other criteria included attendance, appropriate use of free time such as time management between tasks, ability to use various modes of transportation, ability to learn as evidenced through mastery learning, and the willingness to cooperate and perform at an acceptable level by accomplishing individual objectives. The Central Campus staff and the WEI's reviewed the folders to select the students to enroll in the program.

The WEI's were responsible for contacting parents to provide them with program information. The high school special education teachers worked with home high school counselors to adjust student schedules to allow for the semester course at Central Campus.

Organization for Instruction

Each of the three instructors met daily with the students to lead activities focused on a personalized assessment of individual characteristics and skills, and to carry out procedural strategies for acceptable social interaction and experiential exploration of drafting, metal and woodworking, and electrical core areas.

During the first six weeks of the fall semester, the students followed the same schedule and the three teachers were each responsible for all instruction. At the end of that time, the layout of the physical plant, the students' need for greater intimacy and concentration, and the desire of the staff to better personalize instruction, resulted in subdividing each class into 3 groups of approximately 7 students which met with each teacher for 45 minutes. Each teacher was responsible for one area of instruction: prevocational skills, vocational assessment or vocational exploration.

The subdivision of the class appeared to be a more appropriate method for instructional grouping of these students. The staff maintained this strategy for the remainder of the 1983-84 school year and expressed plans to continue that type of grouping for the 1984-85 school year.

RESULTS OF EVALUATION

In September 1983 the Central Campus Special Education Steering Committee, together with the Department of Evaluation, Research and Testing, developed an evaluation design appropriate for the TYE program. The TYE Coordinator was designated as the one responsible for providing information on six areas: student enrollment, committee meetings, curriculum, individual student reports, staff orientation, and budget.

Since TYE is a first year program, this evaluation will provide information to assist in identifying strengths and weaknesses to help in future decisions for the program. In addition to the documentation provided by the coordinator, onsite visits and staff consultations were utilized to gather data. This report describes each of the six identified areas and itemizes the documentation for each. Comments and recommendations appear at the end of the evaluation.

Student Enrollment

Documentation: class lists for fall and spring, 1983-84.

During the fall semester, 42 students were enrolled. There were four withdrawals. Two were staff initiated during the early weeks because the students did not appear ready for the Central Campus experience; two were student initiated. Thirty-eight students completed the fall semester.

There were 40 different students enrolled for the second semester and 3 withdrawals. Two were initiated by students and one was initiated by Tech administration. Thirty-seven students completed the second semester.

The types of disabilities of the enrollees were representative of the disabilities of students in the district's comprehensive high schools. An effort was made to enroll a balanced number of students from special education categories in the morning and afternoon in both the fall and spring classes. Table 1 shows the breakdown by category of the special education classifications of students in the program. The table does not include the two students who were early withdrawals.

TABLE 1

Special Education Classifications of
Students Enrolled in the Central Campus TYE Program

School		Category					Total	
		BD	HI	LD	MD	PD	N	%
East	Fall 1983	1		4	2		7 = 15	18.75
	Spring 1984	1		4	3		8	
Hoover	Fall 1983	3					3 = 6	7.5
	Spring 1984	3					3	
Lincoln	Fall 1983				7		7 = 17	21.25
	Spring 1984				10		10	
North	Fall 1983	3			5		8 = 14	17.50
	Spring 1984	3			3		6	
Roosevelt	Fall 1983	2			5		7 = 13	16.25
	Spring 1984	2			4		6	
Tech	Fall 1983		2	6			8 = 15	18.75
	Spring 1984			6		1	7	
Total N		18	2	20	39	1	80	
%		22.5	2.5	25	48.75	1.25		100

BD = Behavioral Disorder
HI = Hearing Impaired
LD = Learning Disability
MD = Mental Disability
PD = Physical Disability

Each of the comprehensive high schools sent students to the TYE program. The number of students sent from each high school reflected the special education enrollment at each building with the exception of Lincoln. The overcrowded conditions in that building resulted in a few more students than might be expected. The Lincoln 11th grade MD students were enrolled during the fall semester; the 10th grade MD students were enrolled during the spring.

TYE students were from grades 10, 11 and 12. The 10th grade was designated as the initial target grade for several reasons. Ninth graders have a crucial first year adjustment to high school; consequently, they have a very structured schedule which may not lend itself to Central Campus scheduling. By focusing on sophomores, particularly during the fall semester, the program has the potential to provide students some of the knowledge, skills and experiences (such as group membershio) necessary to insure success in the entry level vocational exploratory classes at the home high schools. This did not preclude, however, admitting juniors and seniors who have had few, if any, pre-vocational experiences. A successful TYE sophomore has ample time to engage in the high school vocational exploratory program. Table 2 shows grade classifications for the first year.

TABLE 2

Grade Level Classification
Students Enrolled in Central Campus TYE Program

School		Grade 10	11	12	Total N		%
East	Fall 1983	5	2		7		
	Spring 1984	2	6		8	= 15	18.75
Hoover	Fall 1983	3			3		
	Spring 1984	1	1	1	3	= 6	7.5
Lincoln	Fall 1983		6	1	7		
	Spring 1984	10			10	= 17	21.25
North	Fall 1983	6	2		8		
	Spring 1984	3	2		*6	= 14	17.5
Roosevelt	Fall 1983	4	3		7		
	Spring 1984	5	1		6	= 13	16.25
Tech	Fall 1983	3	3	2	8		
	Spring 1984	5		2	7	= 15	18.75
Total N		47	26	6		80	
%		58.75	32.5	7.5			100

*One student was not grade classified.

Committee Meetings

Documentation: agendas and summaries of monthly Steering Committee meetings.

The Steering Committee for the program was composed of the Director of Special Education, the three special education supervisors, five WEI's, three Central Campus teachers, and the program coordinator. Other interested persons, such as the Supervisor of Career, Vocational and Industrial Education were advised of the meetings and invited to attend.

The committee's purpose, as identified at the first formal meeting in September, was to make recommendations, resolve issues, assist in setting policy, and develop time lines for TYE. The evaluator read summaries of all eight of the monthly meetings to determine attendance and general topics and to obtain an overview of committee activity. Observations were as follows:

1. The meetings were well attended by the coordinator, one of the three supervisors, the majority of the WEI's, and two of the three teachers. The third teacher attended only two meetings because of a conflict with extracurricular duty assignments. Two of the supervisors and the director did not attend regularly.
2. A well organized agenda was published for each meeting. Summaries of those meetings indicated that business adhered closely to the agendas and the group acted on each item.
3. During the year the committee clarified their purpose and goals, developed an evaluation plan, established methods for referral and individual student reports, set enrollment guidelines and procedures, identified orientation strategies, provided 1984-85 budget recommendations, defined staff roles and responsibilities, and monitored feedback on program success. In addition, they selected a program title, appointed a committee to design and submit a procedures manual, submitted a grant proposal, developed a job description for the new position of itinerant teacher, investigated other community vocational programs for special education students, and increased public awareness and understanding of TYE by encouraging members to act as presenters for local and state meetings and conventions.

4. Several issues were not resolved by the committee, primarily because they were beyond the scope of this group and involved preliminary administrative action from the Director of Special Education, the Council of High School Principals, or other administrative staff.

   a. Although open entry/exit was identified as a desirable aspect of the program, the strategies for implementation were not in place. The high school principals must first examine the effect of open entry/exit and the problems it would create in their buildings. They must similarly address the issue of premature exit from the program.

   b. Another unresolved issue was consistent attendance reporting and uniform enforcement of school rules. At present there are some disparate reporting methods regarding excused and unexcused absences and suspensions among the high schools. It was reported at the January meeting that both high school administrators and TYE staff have expressed mutual concerns regarding communication procedures and school rules.

5. The issue of deviation from steps outlined in the Central Campus Discipline Policy was addressed by the committee. The coordinator indicated that vice principals have not had much experience dealing with special education students in their buildings and, consequently, the TYE staff increased intervention steps before referral to a vice principal. When students were referred to a vice principal, however, the follow-up communication and subsequent action for both TYE and comprehensive high school staff were not clearly defined.

Curriculum

Documentation: course descriptions, outlines, objectives and onsite visits.

The TYE program was designed to give students experiences in three areas: prevocational skills, vocational exploration and vocational self-assessment. Each enrollee spent approximately 45 minutes per day for one semester participating in instructional activities in each of these areas. Despite the division in instruction, the three teachers had consistent rules for behavior. In addition, students were expected to apply skills taught in one area throughout the entire program day.

The prevocational skills instructor drew from a list of district vocational objectives to select those that were appropriate for each class. A variety of learning activities, such as paper and pencil, role playing, and use of the computer, were utilized to provide the students exposure to a selected range of jobs in major occupational clusters in order to aid development of prerequisite skills necessary to enter those clusters. Instruction included basic understanding of skills common to most types of employment such as using a time clock, figuring time cards and paychecks, acquiring social skills to improve interpersonal relationships, and developing job keeping/seeking skills. Students were expected to apply these skills throughout the TYE instructional period.

Students explored vocations in drafting, metal and woodworking, and electricity by participating in projects designed to give them "hands-on" experiences in areas which are related to Central Campus core areas. They were expected to acquire skills in safety, measurement, tool identification, and problem-solving. All students participated in the

same projects. Those who succcessfully completed these activities had the opportunity to design projects reflecting individual interests and aptitudes. The exploratory vocational teacher reported teaming with Central Campus core area teachers to assist two students with their individual projects. He appeared satisfied with this cooperative approach and found it to be advantageous in both case. Students practiced standard shop organization by participating in management activities designed to facilitate cooperation and responsibility.

Students completed a variety of vocational assessment instruments to help them determine their own interests, aptitudes and abilities. Because assessment was a major part of the instructional activities, the results were not available until near the end of the course; therefore, the assessment information could not be used to individualize instruction in the other two areas. The assessment teacher indicated that home school special education teachers and WEI's will administer two of the assessment tests next year prior to student program enrollment. Assessment information and a written summary report for each student was sent to each home high school at the conclusion of the course.

Individual Student Reports

Documentation: files of individual TYE students.

Instructors prepared evaluation files for TYE students which contained results of the vocational assessment and indicated achievement, interest, and aptitudes. The reports were sent to the high school special education teachers for use in developing individual educational plans.

Staff Orientation

Documentation: newsletters, staff and committee meeting summaries, information pamphlet, inter-office letters, and student questionnaire.

The TYE staff was actively involved in orientation for Central Campus for high school staff and prospective students. Information was disseminated through newsletters, pamphlets, building presentations, tours, site visits, and open houses. The responses from students and staff were generally favorable.

Inservices were conducted during fall conference days for high school special education staff. This was followed by a November open house for Central Campus and central office staff and a second open house for the general public. The open houses were well attended on both occasions. In November, TYE staff made an informational presentation to the Special Educational Advisory Committee which is composed of parents, teachers, representatives from the various special education disability areas, Association Children Learning Disabilities (ACLD) administrators, and representatives from disability organizations. Presentations also were made to the Ruby Van Meter Building Advisory Council, the Council of Principals, and the Council for Exceptional Children Special Education Convention.

WEI's were identified as the crucial communication link for those involved in TYE. In addition to other liaison activities, WEI's were responsible for notifying parents and students of selection for the program, reporting to the comprehensive high school concerning student status, reviewing student evaluation reports with TYE and high school staff, and working in conjuction with the TYE vocational exploratory

teacher and core areas instructors to determine student competencies. Because of the nature of their responsibilities, the WEI's handled much of the individual orientation.

Prospective TYE students, accompanied by a TYE staff member, visited Central Campus during the fall student orientation. Spring enrollees had an opportunity to visit the TYE classroom with their high school special education teacher or WEI to obtain firsthand information. The first week of instruction was reserved for orientation activities to help the students make the necessary transition to the Central Campus situation.

A student attitude survey regarding Central Campus was given in October to students in the fall class. Parents were contacted regarding enrollment and later invited to an open house. Although these feedback attempts were useful, they were limited. Evaluation is an important program component. As part of the evaluation process, adequate feedback should be received from those who are the direct recipients of the services.

Budget

Documentation: budget summary sheets for 1983-84 and 1984-85 school years.

Funding for the TYE program in 1983-84 came from two local sources: Special Education funded the teacher salaries and travel expenses; the Instructional Division funded equipment, materials and supplies, and inservice. Figure 1 lists the amounts budgeted for the 1983-84 school year.

Figure 1

TYE Budget
1983-84

Salaries	$ 97,718
Travel	600
Equipment, materials, and supplies	16,000
Staff Development	5,616
Total	$119,934

COMMENTS

1. The target selection of second semester 9th graders and first semester 10th graders allows participating students to enroll in the vocational exploratory courses in their home high schools as a preparation for Central Campus courses during grades 11 and 12.
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RECOMMENDATIONS

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2. The Steering Committee should investigate moving more of the assessment to the home high school and/or including an open entry/exit assessment portion as the first phase of the TYE program.
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